

Human Rights Commission - Minutes

Date: Wednesday, November 15, 2023

Time: 8:00 PM

Location: 27 Maple Street, HHS Conference Room, 2nd Floor

Conducted by Hybrid (Remote and In-Person)

Attendees: Co-chairs Carney, Pusey. Commissioners Bauer, Beauchemin, Grossman, Horowitz, S. Jones, G. Jones, Key, and Soneja

Absent: Commissioner Bryant

DEI: Jillian Harvey

Community members: R. Gruber

1. Remote Meeting Notice and Land Acknowledgement

2. Review of October 2023 Meeting Minutes

- Edits: Capitalize Commission, delete “organizations”
- Don’t need to name who voted no or abstentions
- Com. Grossman moved to approve, Com. S Jones seconded and passed with 2 abstentions

3. Proposed Statement on the 40th Anniversary of the Iranian Massacre of Baha'i Women (Farjam Mohtadi)--tabled

Motion by Chair Pusey, seconded by Com. Bauer, to move original agenda item 9 to 4. Passed unanimously.

4. Co-Chairs Report

a. APD Meeting with Chief Flaherty

- Response to a suspicious person thought to have a gun generated questions about whether this was racial profiling and whether the level of response was necessary. Chief Flaherty said it was an appropriate response. A delay in reporting required a broader response. Ultimately, there was no threat. Will do a retraining of staff.
 - Discussion about:
 - desire to know what exactly happened and what is the normal procedure for the school and for the APD?
 - how did the school support the person who was mistakenly identified
 - School WG to explore further
- Checking whether the protocol of reporting to the AHRC is being followed properly.
- Removal of posters of kidnap victims: Treating as hate incidents, so should be reported, but not a crime to remove them from public property.
- Graffiti at the Alewife underpass: reported to AHRC, who told police, and was removed.

b. DEI Co-Chairs

- Rainbow Commission: Leadership transition coming, Transgender Day of Resilience coming up, AHRC is cosponsoring
- Disability Commission working on budgeting issues
- Annual Reports are all due in January
- Other Commissions do not make statements

d. **Meeting with Rabbi Avi from the Center for Jewish Life and two of his congregants:** Concern expressed about the AHRC statement. Anger and disappointment, especially about the word “inhumane.” AHRC co-chairs explained the process for the most recent statement. Discussed planning for Community Conversations on Anti-Semitism, Community Gatherings, and staying in contact. Left with a better understanding of each other.

- Motion by Com. Bauer to establish an ad hoc WG to consider whether statements are useful and under what conditions, and to pause on statements until the WG reports back in the next meeting, seconded by Com. Horowitz. Discussion on the variety of statements we do, whether a call to action is better, and the AHRC's role to educate. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Proposed Statement calling for a ceasefire in Israel–tabled

5. Incidents & Complaints and APD Updates

a. Commissioner Updates: Incidents mentioned above regarding taking down of posters and graffiti. Explained about lack of protections if posted on public property, encouraged ways to put up signs on private properties.

6. DEI Update

- a. Coffee Chats—reviewed benefits of past in-person ones. Co-chairs will send out a sign-up.
- b. Annual reports being worked on; language access project working well generally, but challenge with Haitian Creole; ethics forms due.
- c. Reparations toolkit; program last night, encourage watching sessions

7. MAHRC Update/Issues - Commissioner Soneja

- a. Last month's meeting: general discussion about statements and that it can help generate conversation, discussion by email about what terrorism means

8. Working Group Updates

a. Schools & Education:

- Still a breakdown in communications in that we are missing a report on a hate incident at the school. The protocol language may need to be strengthened.
- Reviewed DEI training at schools.
- Script for the civics classes to be written by Com. Soneja will then be filmed.

- APS is considering disbanding the Superintendent's Advisory Committee and starting a DEI Task Force. AHRC is being asked to work with the Superintendent's office to start the DEI Task Force, but still need more information, so would like to place it on the agenda to discuss next month.
- Will get an intern in January!
- A lot of anti-semitic incidents at the High School do not get reported

b. Outreach / Events

- Reviewed plans for the rest of the year and 2024 and related budget requests.
- Briefed on 250 planning.
- Motion to cosponsor IPD by Com. Bauer, seconded Com Horowitz, passed unanimously
- Motion to cosponsor MLK and up to \$200 for PPE/water by Com. Bauer, seconded Com Horowitz, passed unanimously
- Motion to cosponsor Day of Learning for up to \$1000, seconded Com Horowitz, passed unanimously

c. Communications

- The next email will focus on how to organize community events
- Editorial calendar developing
- Working to restart the rapid response team
- Social Media: need all to engage; thoughts requested on Human Rights Day

10. MCAD Training on Civil Rights

- Offers various civil rights training, DEI office checking on timing and availability

11. Community Input–none

12. Announcements

- Expression of deep concern about Sudan
- Request to ensure postponed AntiSemitism discussion is at the start of agenda for next month

13. Next meeting – Wednesday, December 20, 2023

a. Incident Handling

- November: Commissioner Pusey
- December: Commissioner Horowitz
- Will pass out a 2024 sign-up

14. Adjournment

Com Horowitz moves, Com. Key seconded and passed unanimously.